Kate the Great

By Meg Cabot

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My mom told me that when I turned 13, I would be finally able to do the two things I have wanted to do for a long time:

1) Get my ears pierced 

1. Babysit

I would be able to babysit not just my little brothers, but other people’s children. I would finally get paid.

Getting my ears pierced was supposed to be easy. Mom did not want me to get my ears pierced at the mall like Kate Malloy did. She wanted my doctor to pierce my ears. Even the doctor thought this was weird.

He said, “Most people take their daughters to Claire’s.” My mom would only let Dr. Bomba. Too bad Mom did not listen to Dr. Bomba, because he made them uneven. Kate Malloy went to Claire’s and her piercings are not uneven.

What two things does the main character want to do when she turns 13?

What was difficult about getting her ears pierced?

Unfortunately, getting the ears pierced was the easiest thing I was able to do. There are not many kids in my neighborhood that need babysitters. Most of the kids are older than me, like Kate Malloy.

The good news is that their is a new family that just moved in, and they have a baby. Mom told me that the Weinmans adopted a baby from China because they could not have a baby of their own.

Unfortunately, they live next door to Kate Malloy, and I think that they will ask her to babysit because she lives next door, and is already in high school.

Describe one positive thing and one negative thing about babysitting using evidence from the text.

When my mom told me that the Weinmans called and wanted me- Jenny Greenley- an 8th grader and not Molly, I was surprised. I even went to the library to check out a book on babysitting.

What happened to Jenny that made her go to the library?

I figured that Kate Malloy was busy with her social life. I knew she had a busy social life because I saw her every morning at the bus stop and on the way home.

When I got to the Weinman’s house on Saturday, they gave me a list of instructions and phone numbers in case I had a problem with the baby, Molly. Before Mr. And Mrs. Weinman left, she said, “I don’t know if you are friends with Kate from next door, but I would appreciate it if you do not let her over here when we are gone.”

Why do you think that Mrs. Weinman told Jenny not to have Kate over the house? This is a prediction question…. no correct answer and no evidence…..

According to Kate, everyone likes her. Apparently the Weinmans do not like her.

When they left, I sit in the living room and drank a soda. Mom does not let me drink soda because it is not good for you. Little Molly was in her bouncy chair, so she was easy to watch. I started watching tv. I was surprised to find that they had a lot of channels! I decided to see what was on HBO. That is when the doorbell rang.

How does Jenny’s behaviors show that she is growing up?

I opened the door, thinking that they must have forgot their keys. It was not Mr. And Mrs. Weinman. It was Kate Malloy. Kate was standing with a boy and wanted to come inside the house.

Kate did not sound happy. She said, “I knew it.” and her eyes narrowed. She continued, “I should have known that they were going to call you instead of me.”

I swallowed. This was bad. Very bad.

I was nervous. I did not want her in the house because this was my first babysitting job. I didn’t want her in the house because she looked angry. I didn’t want her in the house because the Weinman’s told me not to let her in the house. I didn’t want her in the house because she was with a boy, who I did not really know. And… I did not want to let them in because the boy was drinking from a can that was wrapped in foil.

Kate had started calling me a “baby” every time she saw me. She called me a baby again, and pushed her way into the house.

Explain how Jenny is feeling, and share what you think Jenny should do now that she is in the house. Use evidence to support your thinking.

The skinny boy stuck out his hand and said, “Hi, I’m Patrick.”

No boy had ever offered to shake hands with me.

“I’m Jenny,” I said and couldn’t help it, and looked at the can covered in foil.

“Oh, its just a can of Dr. Pepper. The foil keeps it cool.”

In the living room, I hear the volume go up. Kate is touching the remote. Molly starts to cry.

What made Molly cry? Use evidence to support your thinking.

”Kate,” I said, “The TV is too loud, its upsetting Molly.”

Kate looked at Molly. “She likes it” and continued to flip through the channels.

Patrick looked at Molly, “ I don’t think Molly likes it.”

Kate threw the remote onto the coffee table and said, “Whatever,” in a bored voice. She added, “Patrick and I are on our way to get ice cream, come with us.”

“I can’t go,” I said a little shocked at the suggestion.

Kate said, “The Weinmans left a phone number. Call them and tell them Molly is sick. Then they will come home, and we can all go out for ice cream.”

What things does Kate do to try to get Jenny into trouble? Use evidence to support your thinking.

I responded, “I can’t do that, that would be lying.” Then I picked up Molly, so that Molly would stop crying. So far it did not work.

Kate mocked me. “Oh, I forgot, Jenny Greenley never lies.”

Patrick was looking at Kate who was getting red in the face. He said, “Come on, Kate. She’s busy with the baby. Let’s go.”

But Kate did not want to go. She taunted me with rude comments. She said, “The Weinmans should want the best for their baby. They should have called me.”

Jenny did not want to hurt Kate’s feelings. She said, “I think they called me because you have a busy schedule.”

Molly continued to cry.

Kate said, “You know what the baby needs, she needs music.” Kate picked up the remote and put on a music station. This made Molly cry harder.

“I think she needs quiet time,” I yelled over the music.

Does Kate’s action show that she is trying to help Jenny or hurt her? Explain.

Kate now said that all Molly needed was a bottle.

I said, “No, I think-”

Kate looked mad. “God, she’s just hungry. I know I have sisters and brothers. Maybe you don’t remember them, since you are always too busy to come over my house.”

What does Kate say to Jenny, that suggests that they were once friends? Use evidence to support your thinking.

I just stood there with Molly in my arms- still crying.It was true. I used to go over her house every day. Kate and I had been best friends despite our age difference. We used to go to the pool. We used to go to the library. We used to ride the bus together.

When Kate read a book about King Arthur she called herself “Kate the Great.” I gave myself a nickname too.

When Kate went into high school, I was only in seventh grade. Suddenly she did not want to go to the pool. She did not want to go to the library. She wanted to go to the mall. If she did go to the pool, she did not want to swim. She wanted to work on her tan.

How did Kate change when she went into high school? Use evidence to support your thinking.

Kate began to call me a baby when I reminded her of our nicknames. This hurt my feelings, but Mom told me it was all part of growing up, and that I would make new friends. Eventually I did make new friends.

How did Jenny deal with being rejected or unwanted by Kate? Use evidence to support your thinking.

I got mad at Kate. It wasn’t my fault that we stopped hanging out. She was the one who was mean to me. I got the courage and said, “Kate, I think it is time for you to leave.”

Kate laughed. She did not leave.

“You have to go,” I said. Kate looked really mad, and the look on her face was scaring me. I took the remote and shut the TV off.

Kate’s face got as red as Molly’s face.

Infer the emotion that Kate is feeling, and why. Use evidence to support your thinking.

Kate said, “You really should be nice to me. I have a lot better things to do then to hang out with someone in 8th grade.”

I finally got brave and spoke my mind, “Kate, if you have something better to do than hanging out with me, do it. I don’t even like you anymore. You are always mean to me. You call me names. If that is what you really think of me, please leave me alone.”

Do you think Kate will change? Will she say something nice? Use evidence to support your thinking.

Kate’s face went white beneath her tan. Then she said- and wasn’t yelling- “Fine, if that’s how you feel. Don’t expect me to rescue you in high school.” She then called her a “freak.”

“I don’t want your help,” is all I said.

Kate stood up and told Patrick, “Let’s go.”

I didn’t even watch them go. Molly was still crying. I knew how she felt….

Why does Jenny feel like crying? Use evidence to support your thinking.

I did not know what to do. So I called Mrs. Weinman. I did not need to say anything. She could hear Molly crying and said that they would be home in five minutes.

Mrs. Weinman looked like a ghost when she entered the house. She ran right over to Molly. She asked how long she had been crying and I told her about 10 minutes. She asked, “What made her cry?”

I did not tell her about Kate and Patrick. I just said, “I didn’t know.”

Mrs. Weinman said, “She is calming down now, I think she was just missing her mommy.”

I felt really bad. I told the Weinmans to go back out. I explained that I thought maybe she was sick.

“No,” Mrs. Weinman said. “You go home. I don’t think Molly is ready for a babysitter yet.”

How do you think Mr. And Mrs. Weinman feel about Molly and/or about Jenny? Make inferences.

I stood there thinking that the Weinmans thought I was not ready to be a babysitter. That is when she walked over to the can of Dr. Pepper and asked, “Is this yours?”

I said, “No,” but then told her it was mine.

My face turned red from lying. I did not want them to know that Kate and Patrick were in the house.

I apologized for messing up their date night. I managed to get outside before I started to cry.

Why do you think Jenny feels like crying? (Make inferences)

I had messed up. I sat on my front steps and cried and cried. I did not want to tell my mother what happened.

The part that made me cry the most was that if the Weinmans never asked me to babysit it was my fault. I should have stood up to Kate in the first place.

I sat on the steps for a long time, then I heard someone walking on the sidewalk. To my surprise, it was Patrick. He said, “Hey, are you ok?”

What behaviors help you understand that Patrick is not mean? Use evidence to support your thinking.

“I’m fine,” I answered, “Why aren’t you with Kate eating ice cream?”

Patrick said, “I left. Sometimes she makes me mad.” He added, “It was really uncool of her to make the baby cry and what she said to you.”

Patrick told her that it wasn’t true. “I think Kate wants to stay friends with you. She seems like she is trying to get you to need her, by telling you bad things about high school. Then he said, “Kate doesn’t have many friends in high school.”

This surprised me. Kate was always telling me she was going to parties.

Why do you think Kate makes up stories? (open ended)

Patrick said, “Well, she does not have a lot of friends, and she does not get invited to parties. She is trying to make herself sound cool.”

I looked at Patrick. It was weird to be sitting on my steps talking to a boy- a boy who was two years older then me.

Then I asked, “Why do you hang out with her?”

Patrick said, “I feel sorry for her.”

And just like that, I stopped hating Kate. I wasn’t going to rush out and become her friend- I realized that Kate was not a happy person. She had to lie, and her friends hung out with her because they felt bad for her.

How does Jenny feel about Kate at the beginning of the story and how does she feel about Kate now? Use evidence to support your thinking.

As I turned to go inside, Patrick said, “See you in school.”

I responded, “I don’t go to your school.”

Patrick said, “Not now, but you will. And when you do, I will see you then.”

Do you think Patrick likes Jenny? Use evidence to support your thinking.

Then he walked off the steps into the darkness.

Then I reached up to my new earrings, and turned them a 1/2 twist, just like Dr. Bomba told me.

The end